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DIRECTORATE OF
INTELLIGENCE

MEMORANDUM

The Situation in Vietnam

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21 July 1967

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Information as of 1600
21 July 1967

HIGHLIGHTS

Aggressive North Vietnamese MIG activity in recent days, which culminated in the loss of three MIGs on 21 July, suggests that Hanoi is still willing to use its fighter defense force despite severe losses incurred earlier this year [REDACTED]

I. The Military Situation in South Vietnam:
South Vietnamese paratroopers and South Korean infantrymen reported killing nearly 400 Communists in two battles on 21 July (Paras. 1-4).

III. Military Developments in North Vietnam:
Recent aggressive North Vietnamese MIG activity indicates that Hanoi is still willing to use its fighter force despite past losses and evacuations (Paras. 1-4).

VI. Other Major Aspects: The Communists have recently moved 207 trucks south toward the Mu Gia Pass despite heavy rain and flooding in the Laos Panhandle (Paras. 1-3).



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I. THE MILITARY SITUATION IN SOUTH VIETNAM

1. South Vietnamese paratroopers and South Korean infantrymen reported killing nearly 400 Communist soldiers in two battles on 21 July.

2. The South Vietnamese forces in blocking positions in the coastal plain some 18 miles northwest of Hue apparently caught Communist troops who were fleeing before a US Marine battalion which had made an amphibious assault into this area on 19 July. The South Vietnamese report killing 240 and capturing 32. One US adviser was killed in the action. Nine South Vietnamese paratroopers were killed and 32 wounded. The Marine operation--BEAR CHAIN--has been seeking Communist Northern Front forces which reportedly were preparing attacks north of Hue.

3. In Phu Yen Province, troops from South Korea's White Horse Division reportedly overran the headquarters of the North Vietnamese Army 95th Regiment and killed 140 enemy. Preliminary reports indicated that the Koreans were in pursuit and had suffered only light casualties. The NVA 95th Regiment has shown signs of increased aggressiveness this summer following several months of relative inactivity.

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III. MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS IN NORTH VIETNAM

1. The loss of three, probably four, North Vietnamese MIGs in an air battle on 21 July, and several less spectacular encounters on the three preceeding days, suggests that North Vietnam is still willing to employ its fighter defense force, despite the severe losses this spring [REDACTED]

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2. On the 21st, eight MIG-17s challenged six US Navy aircraft attacking the Ta Xa POL facility 20 miles northeast of Hanoi. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] Operational reports state that the MIGs were armed with air-to-air rockets and guns and were aggressively flown.

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3. Less aggressive actions were attempted by North Vietnamese MIGs in encounters with US planes during 18-20 July and no aircraft were lost by either side. On the 18th, two MIG-21s from Phuc Yen attempted to attack US jets assisting in the rescue of a downed pilot about 45 miles south-southwest of Hanoi. On 19 July eight MIG-17s [REDACTED] were unsuccessful in attacking USAF F-105s which were bombing a POL dump near the Phuc Yen Air Base.

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4. The air actions of the past four days are a distinct break in the pattern of North Vietnamese fighter activity since 5 June when the last Communist MIG was shot down. In the intervening seven weeks, the North Vietnamese Air Force appeared to concentrate on retraining and demonstrated little or no interest in engaging US aircraft. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] It is possible that the recent air action indicates that North Vietnam is again prepared to put up determined MIG opposition to US strike forces. [REDACTED]

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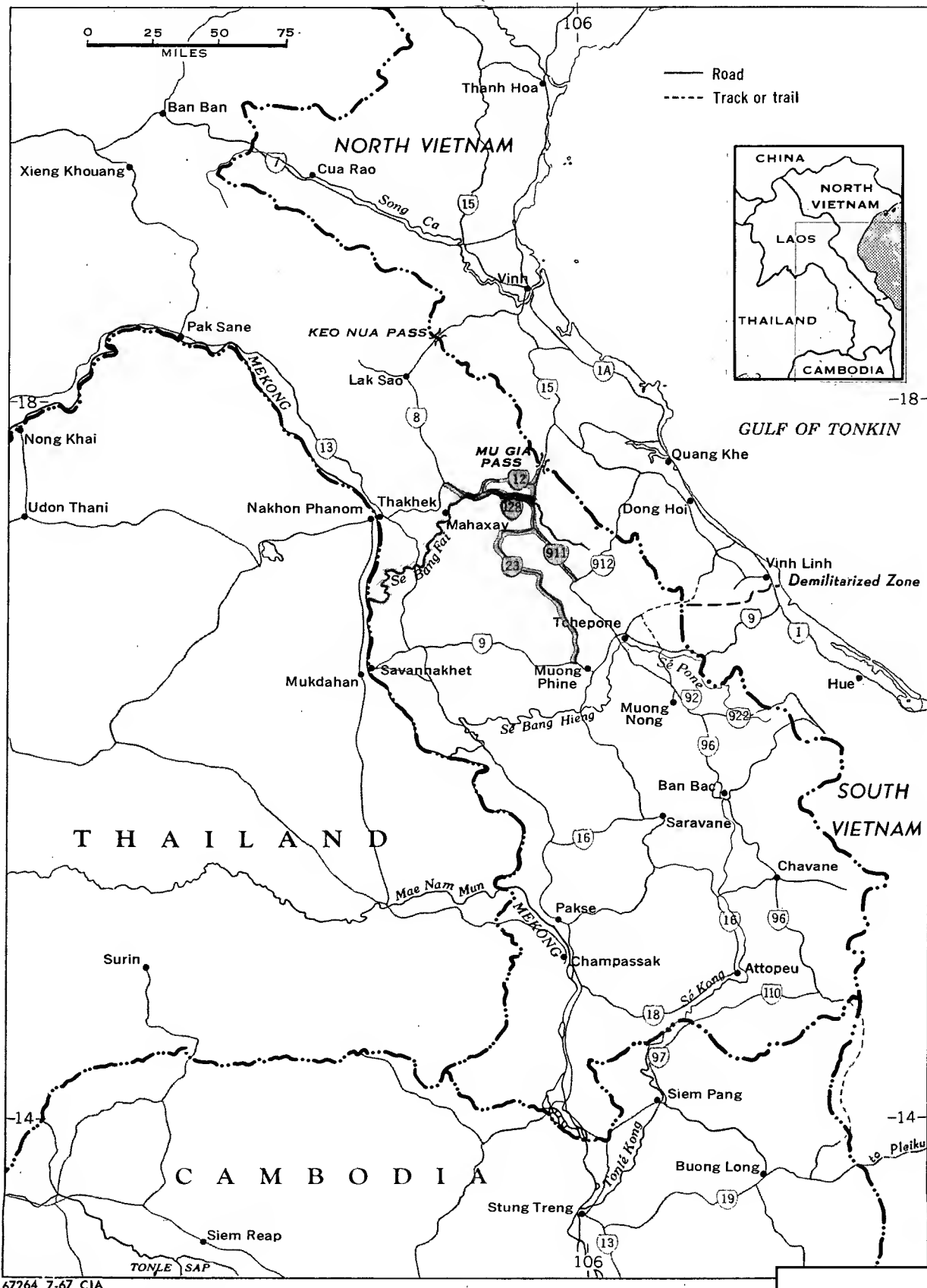
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LAOS PANHANDLE



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VI. OTHER MAJOR ASPECTS

1. The Communists have recently moved 207 trucks south toward the Mu Gia Pass despite heavy rain and flooding in the Laos Panhandle.

[redacted]
north of the Mu Gia Pass reported that between 12 and 17 July 207 trucks or an average of some 35 per day moved toward Laos. [redacted]

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[redacted] the past several weeks have shown only a few trucks per day moving toward Laos compared with about 19 trucks per day during the recent dry season. It is probable that the 207 trucks will not move much beyond the Mu Gia Pass area in Laos. Reports [redacted] through mid-July indicate that roads south of the Route 23/911 junction were flooded and bomb cratered. Truck traffic was reported as possible only to the Bang Fai River about 15 miles south of the Mu Gia Pass.

3. Supplies reaching the Bang Fai River are apparently being unloaded at this point and stockpiled. Thus it appears that these supplies are not intended for immediate movement to South Vietnam. Some of these supplies may be intended for Communist forces in the Laotian panhandle. Reports [redacted]

[redacted] indicate that during the past two weeks an average of 12 boats a day, one third of which are usually carrying rice, moved west on the river toward Mahaxay. Previously, only a few trucks a week had moved west on Route 128/12 which parallels the river. The road was recently reported to be in poor condition.

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